

Sidney Zagri at the Republican National Convention

Elie Abel: The gentleman sitting beside me here in the studio is the most persuasive fellow. He can claim more success than Governor Scranton in persuading the Republican Platform Committee to amend its draft. He's Sidney Zagri the Legislative Council for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Mr. Zagri would you care to tell us about your success with the platform committee?

Sidney Zagri: Well thank you Mr. Abel. We were successful and our International Union is indeed gratified by the adoption to the 1964 Republican platform of our demand for a congressional investigation of police state tactics employed by the Department of Justice. I have here the exact language, which is very brief.

Elie Abel: Would you read it please?

Sidney Zagri: It has resorted to police state tactics using the great power of the federal government agencies to compel compliance with administration desires, notably in the steel price disputes. The Department of Justice, in particular, has been used improperly to achieve partisan, political, economic, and legislative goals. This abuse of power should be the subject of a congressional investigation.

Elie Abel: I take it you interpret that to mean that the Republican platform deplores Mr. Robert Kennedy's use of his powers as Attorney general in the case of Jimmy Hoffa.

Sidney Zagri: This is exactly correct, not only in the case of Jimmy Hoffa, but also in other celebrated cases such as the Roy Cohn case, where the Department of Justice directed a surveillance of Roy Cohn's mail and that of his attorney. In the case of General Walker, where he was incarcerated, on summary arrest orders without hearing and also in the Roger Blough case, the famous Midnight post midnight call upon the press at the time, the government using his full power to keep the steel prices down.

Elie Abel: Do you propose to try to persuade the Democratic Party to write the same plank into its platform?

Sidney Zagri: I am hopeful of Democratic leaders assemble next month in Atlantic City. We'll have the courage required to insert in their platform a similar provision. Calling for action.

Elie Abel: If they do. Not, which seems at least a fair assumption does that mean the Teamsters Union will support the Republican candidate for president?

Sidney Zagri: I'm not quite ready to agree with your assumption. The Sutter Committee, headed by chairman. Emanuel Sutter a Democrat calls for

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such an investigation on the 23rd of March of this year. However, I regret to say the committee hasn't acted. Yet, but we have support bipartisan support in that committee, and as of now, I count about 21 out of 35 votes, favoring public hearings now.

Elie Abel:

Would you expect the Teamsters to make an endorsement for President in this campaign?

Sidney Zagri:

That is a conjecture. We will have. A meeting of our General Executive Board after the Atlantic City Convention and at that time I am certain a decision will be made.

Elie Abel:

Thank you, Mr. Zagri. This is Elie able at the Cow Palace.

Male Voice:

I should have asked Elie that looked like a Jimmy Hoffa button on his lapel, was it? Was that a Jimmy Hoffa button on his lapel? It looked like it. Anyway so far. Tonight we have had two charges of. [button playing] "Like I said, Jimmy Hoffa is my friend." The button I've just been informed. I have a button in my ear, I've just been informed that it says Jimmy Hoffa is my friend.